



The International Labour Organization
Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean
In collaboration with
The Government of Jamaica



10th ILO Meeting Of Caribbean Ministers Of Labour

REALIZING DECENT WORK UNDER THE 2030 AGENDA

Port Antonio, Jamaica Pegasus Hotel, Kingston, Jamaica

23-24 February 2017

www.ilo.org/cml2017

ANNOTATED AGENDA

10TH ILO MEETING OF CARIBBEAN MINISTERS OF LABOUR

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INTRODUCTION

The States of the Caribbean have made significant progress in economic and social development in the last 20 years. However, the deceleration in the world economy, the decrease in the prices of primary commodities and other cyclical factors are affecting the progress and prospects in the short- to medium-term. From a longer-term perspective, certain long-standing characteristics continue to challenge the region, such as high economic vulnerability and fragility associated with small-island states and natural disasters, the lack of economic diversification and productive development and the vulnerabilities associated with external shocks in small open economies. Both long-term vulnerabilities and short-term shocks have negatively impacted labour market developments and unemployment in most Caribbean countries, including in particular, for young people.

External factors are also affecting the world of work in the Caribbean. Globalization, climate change, technological innovation, demographic shifts, and a number of economic factors bring new challenges that tend to exacerbate inequality. These changes deeply affect where future jobs will come from, how work is organized, what kind of jobs exist, and how work is governed. Understandably, they generate both fears and hopes. Making the right policy choices will be instrumental for the Caribbean countries to chart the future. And it is worth stressing that a better future of work requires a better future for production, since it is the world of production and the corresponding technologies and productivity in enterprises that sustain the world of work.

The Caribbean environment makes Goal 8 of the SDGs more relevant than ever. The promotion of sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all is extremely relevant for the region. This Goal, which is fully aligned with the Decent Work Agenda, cannot be achieved without a good balance of productive development, growth, technology, employment, human capital and economic and social policies. This objective contains a new vision that combines a renewed focus on the drivers of growth with specific attention on the traction that the growth process must have in labour markets by creating more and better jobs. This combination makes policy coherence and better policy coordination, at both national and regional levels, an imperative.

The Ministerial Meeting this year presents a great opportunity to address two main and closely related challenges: on the one hand, the ongoing objective of generating more inclusive and sustainable growth with more and better jobs, and on the other to better understand the Future of Work that will allow Ministers of Labour in the Caribbean to shape policies. The most recent meeting of Ministers took place in March 2015 in The Bahamas. The meetings have traditionally produced Conclusions that guide the priorities of the Decent Work Agenda in the Caribbean.

OBJECTIVES

Two main themes underpin the agenda. The first theme seeks to explore how the Decent Work Agenda can be elevated at both national and regional policy level. The second theme will deal with practical strategies to promote decent work in the Caribbean, especially in light of recent swipes of retrenchments and a feared continued rise of un(der)employment and informality. Topics that will be addressed include (1) legislation and regulation; (2) how to address the rise of non-standard employment; (3) the important role of active labour market programmes and interventions that help workers transition including the role of skills in improving productivity; and (4) tools for workplace productivity and the role of good labour management relations.

The 10th Meeting of Caribbean Ministers of Labour has four objectives:

1. To review progress being made by the countries and the region since the last Meeting of Caribbean Ministers of Labour in 2015 in promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable development with productive employment and decent work in line with Goal 8 of the SDGs.
2. To consider the Future of Work Initiative, which is an important part of the ILO's Centenary Initiative, and to discuss the main challenges and opportunities to advance towards a better Future of Work in the Caribbean.
3. To determine the mix of policies needed to promote growth that is fair, inclusive and sustainable and to explore how the Decent Work Agenda can be effectively integrated in the national articulations of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.
4. To identify and share good practices that can be replicated in addressing regional challenges, and to assess how the ILO can strengthen its support to member States and the region in developing responses.

MEETING VENUE

Jamaica Pegasus Hotel
81 Knutsford Boulevard, Kingston 5, New Kingston
Jamaica

Telephone: +1 (876) 926-3691-9
Fax: +1 (876) 929-0593
Website: <http://www.jamaicapegasus.com>

The Meeting will take place at the Talk of the Town room, 17th floor.

Registration of delegates will begin on arrival at the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel on Tuesday, 21 February, 2017 and will continue on Wednesday, 22 February 2017 from 8:00 a.m. in the Belisario Suite on the ground floor of the hotel.

PROGRAMME

Day 1 - Thursday 23 February 2017

09:00 – 09:30	Opening of the Ministers Meeting
09:30 – 09:45	Adoption of agenda and establishment of Drafting Committee
09:45 – 10:15	<i>Break</i>
10:15 – 12:15	Elevating Decent Work to the national and regional policy level through social partnership
12:15 – 13:00	Presentation of the 2016 ILO Report on Non-standard Employment Around the World
13:00 – 14:30	<i>Lunch</i>
14:30 – 16:00	Strategy for harmonization of labour laws: A discussion on options
16:00 – 16:30	<i>Break</i>
16:30 – 17:30	Regional Initiative, Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labour
18:00	Cocktail hosted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security of Jamaica

Day 2 - Friday 24 February 2017

09:00 – 10:30	A Skilled workforce for sustainable growth and development
10:30 – 11:00	<i>Break</i>
11:00 – 12:00	Improving productivity and competitiveness: The role of the labour management relations and transitioning to formality
12:00 – 13:00	Progress and outlook on labour cooperation in the Caribbean
13:00 – 14:30	<i>Lunch</i>
14:30 – 16:00	Presenting and adopting the Conclusions of the Meeting and closing
16:00 – 17:00	Twenty-first special Meeting of the CARICOM Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD) – Labour

09:00 – 09:30 Opening of the Ministers Meeting

Honourable Shahine Robinson, Minister, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Jamaica

Mr Guy Ryder, Director General, International Labour Organization

Ms Myrna Bernard, Director, Human Development, Directorate of Human and Social Development, CARICOM

09:30 – 09:45 Adoption of agenda and establishment of Drafting Committee

Chairperson: Hon. Shahine Robinson, Minister, Ministry of Labour and Social Security,
Jamaica

Delegations are invited to propose officials to establish the Drafting Committee, which will be in charge of drafting the Conclusions of the Meeting. The Committee will consist of 4 (max 5) persons and will produce the draft Conclusions which will be discussed at the end of the Meeting. The ILO will provide support to the Committee. The Committee will meet during the lunch break on day 1 to define its working methodology.

09:45 – 10:15 Break

10:15 – 12:15 Session 1: Elevating Decent Work to the national and regional policy level and the role of social partnership

Decent work has been accepted by all Caribbean countries as a principle policy objective for achieving social justice. Social dialogue has proven worldwide to be a useful tool in shaping policy development and addressing economic challenges. This session will discuss what has to be done to ensure that decent work and employment are at the centre of economic and social policies, both at the national levels and for the Caribbean as a whole. The session will address the following three topics:

1. Social dialogue: Most countries in the region have mechanisms for social dialogue. Do these effectively facilitate policy development that puts labour and employment and the promotion of decent work at the centre of national development? What else is needed to make this happen? Should social dialogue be limited to labour and social issues or should it also include productive development policies?
2. Sustainable Development Goals: How can Ministries of Labour remain actively involved in the SDGs follow-up? How should one integrate Decent Work and the SDGs into national policies? How can they make sure that tripartite constituents are actively engaged?

3. Social dialogue mechanism in CARICOM: The importance of social dialogue both at national and regional level has been recognized. A proposal for a regional social dialogue mechanism has been put forward at the CARICOM level, most recently at the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME) Consultation with the tripartite constituents in September 2016. How can this be made to work?

A background paper has been prepared and will be presented by the ILO to set the framework. The Chairperson will address each topic separately. Selected panellists will be invited to make remarks in accordance with the introduction above and the Background Note, after which a discussion with the audience will take place on each of the topics. All panellists will be invited to make a final and brief comment at the end of the session.

Chairperson and moderator: Hon. Shahine Robinson, MP, Minister, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Jamaica

Introductory presentation: Mr Rainer Pritzer, Senior Specialist, Social Dialogue and Labour Administration, ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean

Panellists: Hon. Shane Gibson, MP, Minister of Labour and National Insurance, The Bahamas

Ms Arlene Martin, Director, Caribbean Employers' Confederation

Hon. Cora Richardson-Hodge, Minister of Home Affairs, Environment and Protected Areas, Labour, Immigration, Human Rights, Constitutional Affairs, Gender Affairs and Information and Broadcasting, Anguilla

Mrs Colette Roberts Ridsen, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Jamaica

Hon. Stephenson King, MP, Minister, Ministry of Infrastructure, Ports, Energy and Labour, Saint Lucia

Ms Gillian Alleyne, General Secretary, Caribbean Congress of Labour

Summary of the session by the ILO and closing by the Chairperson.

12:15 – 13:00 Session 2: Presentation of the 2016 ILO report on Non-Standard Employment Around the World

Non-standard forms of employment (NSE) have become a contemporary feature of labour markets around the world. Their overall importance has increased over the past few decades in both industrialized and developing countries, as their use has become more widespread across economic sectors and occupations. NSE comprises four different employment arrangements: i) temporary employment, ii) Part-time and on-call work, iii) multi-party employment relationship, and iv) disguised employment/dependent self-employment. NSE deviate from the "standard employment relationship", understood as work that is full-time, indefinite, as well as part of a subordinate relationship between an employee and an employer.

For most workers, employment in NSE is associated with insecurity. NSE can also pose challenges for enterprises, the overall performance of labour markets and economies as well as societies at large. Supporting decent work for all requires an in-depth understanding of NSE and its implications.

This report details trends and consequences of NSE and draws on international labour standards and national experience to advance policy recommendations that help to ensure the protection of workers, sustainable enterprises and well-functioning labour markets. The session will primarily present the report and allow to discuss the implications of the NSE for the Caribbean.

Chairperson and moderator: Hon. Shahine Robinson, MP, Minister, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Jamaica

Keynote presentation: Ms Mariya Aleksynska, Labour Market Specialist, International Labour Organization, Geneva

Panellist: Dr. Marshall Hall, Chairman, Labour Market Reform Commission, Jamaica

Closing of the session by the Chairperson.

13:00 – 14:30 Lunch and meeting of the Drafting Committee

Members of the Drafting Committee will meet at 14:00 in the Talk of the Town room, 17th floor, to agree on the working methodology of the Committee.

14:30 – 16:00 Session 3: Strategy for harmonization of labour laws: A discussion on options

At national level, labour law reform has always been on the social agenda in Caribbean countries. It both modernized the heritage from the colonial era and responded to evolving country realities. Social partners have taken part in consultations, and in many countries the process is ongoing and continues to be a priority, even more so in the rapidly transitioning world of work.

At regional level, harmonization of laws has - since CARICOM's inception in 1973 and in the context of establishing a common market, now called CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) - been an important area of work for CARICOM. With the assistance of the ILO, CARICOM developed and adopted in 1995 and 1997, Model Labour Laws on four subjects (Equality of opportunity and treatment, occupational safety and health, registration and recognition of trade unions and employers' organizations, and termination of employment). These Models were a regional response to assist those countries that wished to undertake labour law reform, and to different extents, certain provisions of the Model Laws have been incorporated in national law. During the same period, CARICOM also adopted the Declaration on Labour and Industrial Relations Principles in 1995.

At the 9th Meeting of Caribbean Ministers of Labour in 2015, the Ministers introduced the issue of harmonization of labour laws, and raised the possibility of an alternative approach based on principles. This session will resume the discussion, benefiting from the results of a research presented in the Background Note. It is expected that this session will discuss and provide an indication on the way forward to further steps in harmonizing labour legislation.

This session will start with the presentation of two national experiences in labour law reform (Saint Kitts and Nevis and Trinidad and Tobago), including the drivers for reform and its process. The ILO will then present a paper describing both model law and principle-based approaches. The Hon. Ministers from Antigua and Barbuda and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines will comment on the paper, their own experience and the possible implications for the Caribbean.

Chairperson and moderator: Hon. Shahine Robinson, MP, Minister, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Jamaica

National experiences: Hon. Vance Amory, Premier of Nevis, Senior Minister and Minister, Ministry of Nevis Affairs, Labour, Social Security and Ecclesiastical Affairs, Saint Kitts and Nevis

Senator Hon. Jennifer Baptiste-Primus, Minister, Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development, Trinidad and Tobago

Introductory presentation: Mr Shingo Miyake, Labour Law and International Labour Standards Specialist, ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean

Comments: Hon. Steadroy Benjamin, MP, Attorney General and Minister, Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs, Public Safety and Labour, Antigua and Barbuda

Hon. Camillo Gonsalves, MP, Minister, Ministry Economic Planning, Sustainable Development, Industry, Trade, information and Labour, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

Summary of the session by the ILO and closing by the Chairperson.

16:00 – 16:30

Break

16:30 – 17:30

Session 4: Regional Initiative, Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labour

The session will allow country representatives to share information on recent or ongoing national efforts to combat and eradicate child labour and to determine how the Regional Initiative can help such endeavour and ensure that eradication of child labour remains high on the political agenda. It will also allow preliminary discussions on a common orientation among Caribbean countries vis à vis their participation at the IV Global Conference on Child Labour to be held in Argentina in November, 2017.

Chairperson and moderator: Hon. Shahine Robinson, MP, Minister, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Jamaica

Panellists: Ministers, or their representatives, from Members States which are part of the Regional Initiative Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labour: Bahamas, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago.

Closing the session by the Chairperson.

18:00 **Cocktail hosted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security of Jamaica**

09.00 – 10.30 Session 5: A skilled workforce for sustainable growth and development

The session aims at providing member States with an overview of strategies that will help ensure a skilled workforce for sustainable growth and development given the global drivers of change i.e., demographic change, equity and inclusive growth, educational attainment, globalization of markets, technology and innovation, and climate change and transition to green economy (ILO 2010).

Adapting the workforce to the current and future market needs and facilitating smooth transition between jobs and status of employment requires a broad set of mechanisms and tools including what is commonly referred to as “Active Labour Market Programmes” (ALMP’s).

The discussion will explore how a skilled workforce can effectively deal with the rapid economic changes occurring in the Caribbean and highlight the role of skills development as a crucial component of ALMP’s. In addition, the discussion will reflect on the increased attention to greening our economies in the Caribbean and the new opportunities for job creation and challenges associated with training and skills development.

Chairperson and moderator: Senator the Hon. Jennifer Baptiste-Primus, Minister, Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development, Trinidad and Tobago

Panellists: Ms Myrna Bernard, Director, Human Development, Directorate of Human and Social Development, CARICOM

Dr Wayne Wesley, Executive Director, HEART Trust/National Training Agency, Jamaica

Senator Dr the Hon. Esther Byer-Suckoo, Minister, Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Human Resource Development, Barbados

Summary of the session and ways forward: Mr Hassan Ndahi, Senior Specialist, Skills and Employability, ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean

Closing by the Chairperson.

10:30 – 11:00 Break

11:00 – 12:00

Session 6: Improving productivity and competitiveness: The role of the labour management relations and transitioning to formality

Low productivity and competitiveness ratings plague most of the countries in the region. Structural issues are often to blame and an increasing number of countries has have embarked on Enabling Environment for Sustainable Enterprises (ESEE) assessments and comprehensive plans of action designed to raise productivity and build resilience and competitiveness.

Current estimates posit that 50 to 90 per cent of enterprises in the Caribbean operate informally, and we observe that their numbers are growing. Greater informality often goes hand in hand with decreased productivity. The informal economy is marked by acute decent work deficits and workers in the informal economy face higher risks of poverty than those in the formal economy. The need for formalization is recognized by policy-makers, but not many countries have adopted an integrated policy agenda to address this.

There is also the issue of productivity in formal enterprises. Several countries in the region have been faced with quite tumultuous industrial relations when enterprises have to make decisions to further their competitiveness where workers have taken to strike action. Sometimes this is perceived by the Government and the employers as a workforce with wrong attitudes, and one not showing a serious commitment to prosperity. Underlying all this, however, is a deep-rooted distrust among the social partners and a long history of confrontational relations and interactions that further jeopardize the already challenged productivity and competitiveness of the countries. What is needed is a real paradigm shift that fully respects workers' rights and puts labour-management cooperation consistently at the centre of productive work practices.

The session will look at the experience of countries in promoting workplace productivity by identifying good practices and obstacles for improvement. It will also examine the role of government and productivity councils in productivity improvement and what can be done to assist with the transition to formality at the enterprise level and how formalization can become a national policy priority. This session will start with a presentation from the ILO to set the context and the experience of Jamaica will be presented.

Chairperson and moderator: Senator the Hon. Jennifer Baptiste-Primus, Minister, Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development, Trinidad and Tobago

Introductory presentation: Mr Kelvin Sergeant, Specialist, Sustainable Enterprise Development and Job Creation, ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean

Panellists: Hon. Keith Scott, Minister within the Ministry of Social Protection, Guyana

Dr Charles Douglas, Executive Director, Jamaica Productivity Centre, Jamaica

Summary of the session by the ILO and closing by the Chairperson.

12:00 – 13:00 Session 7: Progress and outlook on labour cooperation in the Caribbean

This sessions will review progress on the Conclusions of the Meeting of Ministers of 2015 and explore how to strengthen the Decent Work Agenda for the Caribbean.

Chairperson and moderator: Senator the Hon Jennifer Baptiste-Primus, Minister, Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development, Trinidad and Tobago

Introductory presentation: Ms Claudia Coenjaerts, Director, ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean

Summary of the session by the ILO and closing by the Chairperson.

13:00 – 14:30 Lunch

14:30 – 16:00 Presenting and adopting the Conclusions of the Meeting and closing

Hon. Shahine Robinson, MP, Minister, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Jamaica

Mr José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs, ILO Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean

NOTE: The 21st meeting of the CARICOM Council of Human and Social Development (COHSOD) – Labour will take place from 16:00 to 17:00

ILO CONTACTS

Mr. Rainer Pritzer (Ext. 434)
ILO Senior Specialist, Social Dialogue and Labour Administration
Email: pritzer@ilo.org

Ms. Angela Colley (Ext. 425)
Senior Secretary
Email: colley@ilo.org

Ms. Ronetta Louis (Ext. 444)
Senior Secretary
Email: louis@ilo.org

Ms. Kathleen Hinkson (Ext. 435)
Senior Secretary
Email: hinkson@ilo.org

ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean
6 Stanmore Avenue
P. O. Box 1201, Port of Spain
Trinidad and Tobago
Tel.: +(868) 623-7178 or 627-6304
Fax: +(868) 627-8978
Email: ilocarib@ilo.org | Web: ilo.org/caribbean
Facebook: facebook.com/ilo.caribbean
Twitter: twitter.com/ILOCaribbean

